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27 March 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Medical Staff

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Division,
Medical Staff

SUBJECT : Career Program for Overseas Medical Officers

1. The following notes are presented from a viewpoint which is openly ignorant of the basic problems and aims of the medical department. The intent of this paper is to set forth in rough draft a possible career plan for overseas medical officers. It will be observed that the "overseas group" is treated as a separate entity. That is a component of the plan.

2. For the purpose of this study, we must assume that continuity of service is a desirable feature among medical officers in overseas stations. Certainly this may be a false assumption. If so, the paper is negated at this point.

3. The ratio of overseas to stateside positions rules out any balanced system of rotation between overseas and stateside posts for a full complement of personnel. For purposes of cover and security, this would offer obvious advantages.

4. The notion of maintaining an individual overseas throughout his career carries with it disadvantages - both from the point of view of the Agency and of the individual involved. Aside from the undesirability of 15-20 years continuous overseas service, a doctor is primarily concerned with the maintenance of his only tangible asset, his knowledge of medicine. The meetings, informative consultations, postgraduate courses and day to day discussion, which mean so much to the American practitioner are largely absent overseas. A substitute should be offered.

5. It is the opinion of this writer that one year's post-graduate training in an approved stateside hospital at the end of each three years' tour of overseas duty would provide a solution to both problems.

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6. At best, it could provide a rather stable corps of overseas medical officers well-versed in the operational aspects of the service, yet well-qualified in the practice of medicine. As a career, this should attract individuals with high professional and intellectual standards.

7. At its worst, those using the Agency to underwrite a residency program for their personal benefit, would have returned at least nine years' overseas service for the favor.

8. Certain objections to the time elements might be valid: Perhaps six months' training every two years, or one year every four years. These are, however, believed to be the upper and lower limits of usefulness.

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